

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PRAGUE IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMCONSUL MUNICH

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 041701

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CSCE, CZ

SUBJECT: JOURNALISTS' VISAS

REF: PRAGUE 0308, PRAGUE 0409

1. WE ARE PLEASED WITH THE GENERAL TONE OF THE KADNAR PRESENTATION AND THE CZECHOSLOVAK DECISION TO ISSUE VISAS TO SEEGER AND DODER. HOWEVER, USIA AND VOA BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE COMPLETELY FORTHRIGHT ABOUT FREUND'S AFFILIATION. THEY BELIEVE VISA APPLICATION SHOULD IDENTIFY HIM AS BEING WITH "USIA (VOA)". RATHER THAN OMIT THE VOA PORTION, THEY HAVE DECIDED THEY WOULD NOT SEND FREUND TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA AT THIS TIME. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, CONFIDENTIAL

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EMBASSY MAY ISSUE A VISA TO TILL.

2. FYI: DEPT/USIA FEEL STRONGLY THAT FREUND OR FUTURE VOA CORRESPONDENTS SHOULD NOT BE FORCED TO SPECIFY IN THEIR VISA APPLICATIONS THE PARTICULAR EVENT OR EVENTS THEY WISH TO COVER. CZECHOSLOVAK PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS IN THE US ARE NOT REQUIRED TO STATE THE SPECIFICS OF THEIR JOURNALISTIC REPORTAGE IN THEIR VISA APPLICATIONS. OUR VISITING JOURNALISTS TRY TO FILL THE VOID CREATED BY THE ABSENCE OF RESIDENT JOURNALISTS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA. FOR THESE REASONS, WE BELIEVE IT IS UNREASONABLE FOR THE CZECH

AUTHORITIES TO LIMIT VOA JOURNALISTS TO COVERING SPECIFIC EVENTS OR TO BE EXPLICIT IN THEIR VISA APPLICATIONS ABOUT THEIR PROPOSED REPORTAGE.

3. WE WILL IN FUTURE TRY TO OBTAIN CZECHOSLOVAK AGREEMENT FOR SOME GENERAL DEFINITION OF THE PURPOSE OF A VOA JOURNALIST'S VISIT, I.E. "FOR GENERAL NEWS COVERAGE". IF WE CAN ACCEPT THE APPLICATIONS OF TILL AND OTHER CZECH JOURNALISTS ON THIS BASIS, IT SEEMS TO US THE CZECHS SHOULD BE ABLE TO LIVE WITH A SIMILAR STATEMENT BY A VOA JOURNALIST. AS A FALLBACK POSITION, VOA JOURNALISTS' APPLICATIONS COULD PERHAPS INCLUDE A SPECIFIC EVENT TO BE COVERED PLUS A GENERAL PHRASE SUCH AS "AND OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST." END FYI

4. AS THE EMBASSY POINTS OUT (PRAGUE 409), THE SEEGER VISA IS PART OF THE DEAL, AND WE WOULD EXPECT THAT HE WILL NOT EXPERIENCE FURTHER DELAYS ONCE THE TILL VISA IS ISSUED. YOU MIGHT REITERATE TO THE MFA OUR EXPECTATION THAT THE CZECHS WILL TAKE A MORE POSITIVE APPROACH IN THE FUTURE TOWARDS ALL US JOURNALISTS APPLYING FOR VISAS.
INGERSOLL

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